

Faculty member awarded grant to study Lake Huron ecosystems

Dr. Jason Martina recently received a grant from NASA to study the impacts of humans on ecosystems of Lake Huron. In particular, the project will examine the effects of climate change, invasive species, and excess nutrient input. The project involves colleagues at several other universities and it is funded through the Minority University Research and Education Project. Another goal of the project is to encourage the participation of minority/under-represented students in scientific research. Interested undergraduate students should contact Dr. Martina to learn more about opportunities. (Posted 7-28-2021)

Faculty member receives NSF CAREER award

Dr. David Rodriguez recently received a CAREER award from the National Science Foundation. These multi-year awards are given out annually to researchers near the beginning of their careers but also far enough along to have established truly exceptional research programs. David's research employs the latest technology in genetic analysis to examine the spread of chytrid fungus among amphibian populations. Much of his research, including the teaching of a study-abroad course, occurs in various nature preserves of Ecuador. This South American country is home to over 580 species of amphibian. Colleagues involved in the funded project include: Dr. Juan Manuel Guayasamin (Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador), Dr. Shawn McCracken (Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi), Mr. Ryan Lynch (Third Millennium Alliance, Ecuador), and Ms. Rebecca Brunner (TXST Visiting Scholar – University of California, Berkeley). (Posted 7-24-2021)

Grant awarded to faculty to study invasive aquatic species

Drs. Weston Nowlin, Benjamin Schwartz, Astrid Schwalb, and Thom Hardy have been awarded a large multi-year grant from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The grant will fund research examining invasive and native aquatic species in Texas and the role that climate change might play in affecting the distribution of various aquatic species. (Posted 7-21-2021)

Grad students win awards at recent SWAN meeting

The Southwestern Association of Naturalists has recognized the outstanding scholarship of three grad students in the Biology Department. Grant Bassett was awarded first place in the Hubbs Poster Competition. Grant presented his research "Diet of the Rio Grande Cooter (*Pseudemys gorzugi*) from a riverine site in west Texas" at the annual meeting held in April. Alex Guzman won a McCarley Student Research Award to support his thesis project, "Effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals on the Red Shiner, *Cyprinella lutrensis*". Daniel Guerra also won a McCarley Award to support his dissertation project, "Examining habitat use of *Gopherus berlandieri* (Texas tortoise) in coastal regions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley". Congratulations to Grant, Alex, and Daniel, and many thanks to SWAN for continuing to support our graduate students and their projects. (Posted 7-1-2021)

Outstanding Dissertation Award presented to ...

Dr. Sara Weaver is the latest recipient of the university's Outstanding Dissertation Award. Her dissertation research, "Understanding Wind Energy Impacts on Bats and Testing Reduction Strategies in

South Texas" was advised by Dr. Ivan Castro-Arellano. Congratulations to Sara, and job well done on the dissertation! (Posted 6-30-2021)

Ph.D. student receives two very prestigious awards

Maria del Mar Moretta-Urdiales, a doctoral student in the lab of Dr. David Rodriguez, was recently awarded two highly competitive scholarships. Maria received the American Association of University Women's International Fellowship and the P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship. Learn more about Maria and her research on biodiversity in Ecuador. Congrats to Maria! (Posted 6-20-2021).

Faculty member wins university award and recognition of her scholarship

Dr. Sarah Fritts recently received the Presidential Seminar Award from the university. Each year the award recognizes a faculty member for outstanding research and other scholarly accomplishments. Good to have someone from Biology win it this year. Congrats to Dr. Fritts! (Posted 6-20-2021)

And this year's winners are

This past spring the department was again unable to host an in-person awards ceremony, but Dr. Shannon Weigum fortunately put together another slideshow-video. Check it out and congrats to all the honorees! (Posted 6-20-2021)

Overdue congratulations to last year's award winners

Despite the 2019-2020 academic year being disrupted by the Covid pandemic, students in the Biology Department were still hard at work, studying, doing research, and just getting the job done. Last April we did not have our normal awards ceremony. Nonetheless, Dr. Shannon Weigum put together this awesome slideshow-video. Check it out. Also, announcement of this year's award winners is right around the corner, be on the lookout. (Posted 3-24-2021)

Faculty Member elected as Fellow to American Society of Microbiologists

Dr. Robert McLean was recently elected a Fellow of the American Society of Microbiologists. According to the society, "Fellows of the American Academy of Microbiology are elected annually through a highly selective, peer-review process, based on their records of scientific achievement and original contributions that have advanced microbiology.". For his scholarly success, Bob credits former and present students, research collaborators at Texas State and elsewhere, former professors and teachers, friends, and family. Congrats to Bob for this well-deserved honor! (Posted 2-28-2021)

Faculty member receives NSF funding for salamander study

Dr. Dana Garcia has been awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation to conduct a study titled "Developmental and Genetic Pathways to Phenotypic Convergence in a Radiation of Groundwater Salamanders". The project will be a collaboration between Dr. Garcia and Dr. David Hillis and Dr. Tom McDevitt at the University of Texas. The study focuses on species in the genus *Eurycea*, a group of salamanders that live in local springs and creeks in central Texas. Some species even live within the interstitial spaces of the limestone substrate. (Posted 8-28-2020)

And the winner is ...

A belated congratulations to Dr. Caitlin Gabor for winning the 2020 Mariel M. Muir Excellence in Mentoring Award! The university officially recognized Dr. Gabor's contributions to mentoring students back in May. This year also marks the completion of Caitlin's 20th year at Texas State. Congratulations to her on a job well done over the years. (Posted 8-27-2020)

Faculty member recently honored with inclusion of paper in a set of classics

Foundations of Paleoecology, Classic Papers with Commentaries (University of Chicago Press, 2019) has now been published. Similar to other anthologies published by UCP, this set for Paleoecology includes papers that have had a lasting impact on the field. Our very own faculty member Dr. Gary Upchurch authored one of these classic papers. Quoting from the book, "The paper by Wolfe and Upchurch served as a model for how to study vegetation and terrestrial ecosystems across important boundary events in the history of life. ... and it changed the conversation from being focused solely on taxonomic changes to a focus on ecological changes in vegetational communities across major events in the geological past." Having a paper accepted for a book such as this is quite the academic accomplishment. Congratulations to Gary and his co-author for their contribution to the historical development of Paleoecology and for being so honored in this new book. (Posted 2-3-2020)
